

T-M Swimmer Skyrockets to the Top

June 4, 2007

By Sean Horejs

CORPUS CHRISTI - "Reaching for the stars" is an often overused metaphor in regard to athletes and their goals. But for Kody O'Connell, it's difficult to find one that fits any better. The Tuloso- Midway swimmer will spend much of his summer in the water with his mind soaring toward the cosmos.

He'll dive into his senior year as one of the top swimmers in Texas. Kody O'Connell has made consecutive trips to the state meet, qualifying in two events each time

"With the work I'm doing this summer, I think I'm going to have a lot of potential this year," he said.

Potential that may extend beyond our atmosphere.

"I definitely want to be part of the future of NASA's vision of space exploration and expanding through the solar system," O'Connell said.

He's been named a high school aerospace scholar, earning the opportunity to participate on a one-week internship at the Johnson Space Center in late June.

"This is a great time to get into NASA," O'Connell said. "Their whole program has been rejuvenated. Probably I'd want to be part of establishing new colonies on not just Mars and the moon but like space stations and orbiting bodies and other things we can explore."

It may be hard to see a connection between his career in the water and the dream of becoming an astronaut. But O'Connell has already received interest from the coach at the air force academy, and the correlations don't end there.

"When I get in the pool to swim, I work as hard as I can to push myself to my limits. In swimming it's milliseconds that count, and in science it's numbers that can make the difference," he said. "It's the details that others don't think about that get you there."

One day after completing the NASA internship, O'Connell is off to Mexico for seven days of high altitude swim training at more than six-thousand feet. It's all in preparation for the American Games National Meet in Colorado in late summer.

reprinted by permission -- KRISTV.com